

HIGH LEVEL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL
DECADE FOR ACTION

"WATER FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, 2018-2028"

Speech for Plenary Session, 9:30- 11:00 am Wednesday 20th

Mr President, Excellencies, Dear Colleagues..... Thank you for the opportunity to address this crucially important and timely conference. I am grateful to the organisers the Republic of Tajikistan for a packed agenda and for assembling such an influential group of speakers and participants.

Central Asia faces a host of opportunities and challenges relating to the use and management of water resources. How we address these myriad issues together to harness development is of the utmost importance as they will touch the lives of every citizen in the region, every day.

The efficient, collaborative and environmentally appropriate use of water resources is at the heart of EBRD activities, from financing of small municipal drinking water projects to the reconstruction of huge hydro-electric power stations, and more recently for us, in the field of irrigation.

EBRD activities in Central Asia touch on water issues in a number of ways through our work in sectors such as municipal water and waste-water, power and energy, and agribusiness; and through cross-cutting programmes such as Green Economy Transition. Our target is to reach 40% of EBRD annual financing commitments in the green economy by 2020 and we are on track.

In Tajikistan for example the EBRD is investing in the rehabilitation of water supply and waste water facilities in 24 towns and cities. As well as improving water quality and supply the projects aim to enhance the financial and operational efficiency and the billing systems of local water utilities.

The region is extremely vulnerable to climate change, regional security and transboundary issues and these considerations are embedded into all of our projects in this area. Our water-related projects are supported by donor funds, particularly from the EU and Switzerland, and more recently from the Green Climate Fund for technical assistance and capital grants. With our government and financing partners we have developed a number of pre-emptive, mitigation and corrective measures to deal with the proper use of water resources.

In all of our activities in the water sphere, we aim to coordinate our support to our clients and governments in close cooperation with the IFI and Donor community.

I'd like to finish by highlighting one such example of cooperation:

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In April this year the EBRD signed a loan of USD 38 million for the further rehabilitation of Quairokom hydropower plant in the north of Tajikistan. EIB will also be providing a loan of USD 38 million and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) will provide further financing of USD 50 million in grants and concessionary loans. This was the first GCF financing in Tajikistan and we hope the first of many.

The Qairokkum project uses a highly innovative approach, agreed with the government, IFIs and donors, to incorporate climate change considerations into the investment design. This will improve Qairokkum's resilience to Tajikistan's changing climate and will also secure a reliable electricity supply for the people of the Sugd region.

In summary, EBRD activities in a number of sectors impact local and regional water issues. We never work with our clients alone, but always in concert with other development partners and I'm so pleased to see many of you well represented today.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak today. This is my first visit to Dushanbe, so far I have seen a lot of slogans related to water and the one which I would like to quote is "Water is life".

Thank you for your attention!

[Timed to: 3 mins 40 seconds]